

Claims 9-17 are presently pending; Claims 1-8 and 18-20 having been cancelled by way of the present amendment. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 9-17 are allowed.

Applicants thank Examiner Punnoose for the interview granted Applicants' representatives on July 18, 2002. During the interview, proposed amendments to pending independent Claims 1, 18, and 20 were discussed.

Applicants respectfully submit that because only the allowed claims remain pending, the application is in condition for immediate allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

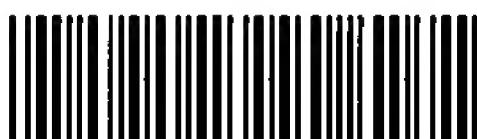


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Serial No: 09/594,479

Amendment Filed on: July 24, 2002

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-8 (Cancelled).

Claims 18-20 (Cancelled).